IMPROVING STUDENTS’ SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH PROJECT BASED LEARNING FOR SECOND GRADERS OF SMPN 1 KAWEDANAN, MAGETAN

Sifa Fauziah Permatasari
Email: sifa.permatasari@gmail.com
Universitas Negeri Malang

ABSTRACT: This Collaborative Classroom Action Research research aims at finding out how Project-Based Learning could improve the speaking skill of second graders of SMPN 1 Kawedanan, Magetan. Data collection was done using questionnaire, interview guide, field notes or observation sheets and students’ worksheets. The findings reveal that group discussions helped students to improve their speaking skill because the discussions encouraged them to interact with their friends in small groups before they began to speak in a big group. The use of Numbered Heads Together to divide students into groups also helped the students to have good interaction with their friends.

Keywords: Speaking skill, Project Based Learning, Second Graders of SMPN 1 Kawedanan, Magetan

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997 as stated in Florez (1999)). Speaking enables students to receive information from people through their conversation, after which they should understand the information and respond to it or communicate their understanding of the information. Standard of competence for second graders stipulates that in speaking skill students should be able to express the meaning of simple conversation for interpersonal and transactional purposes, in the formal and informal situation to communicate with the nearest environment and/or in academic context. It means that the students must be able to speak to express what they want to show to others.

To investigate second graders’ proficiency in spoken English, the researcher conducted a preliminary study of the eighth graders at SMPN 1 Kawedanan. The researcher found that the students have several problems in speaking, such as reluctance, shyness, fear of committing oral mistakes, besides the students show poor speaking ability and they lack peers or social circles with whom they can explore their speaking potentials.

The researcher considers the use of Project-Based Learning as an appropriate strategy to help the students’ to improve their speaking skill. PBL is an individual or group activity that goes on over a period of time, resulting in a product, presentation, or performance as quoted in IAE-Pedia. PBL is defined as “instructional approach that contextualizes learning by presenting learners with problems to solve or products to develop” (Moss & Van Duzer, 1998, p.1). PBL is different from traditional instruction...
in which it emphasizes learning through student-centered, interdisciplinary, and integrated activities in real world situations (Solomon, 2003; Willie, 2001 as quoted by Poonpon, 2011). More importantly, PBL is both process and product oriented (Stoller, 1997 stated in Poonpon (2011)). Studies indicate that PBL: (a) has a positive effect on student’s content knowledge and the development of skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving; (b) benefits students by increasing their motivation and engagement; and (c) is challenging for teachers to implement, leading to the conclusion that teachers need support in order to plan and enact PBL effectively while students need support including help setting up and directing initial inquiry, organizing their time to complete tasks, and integrating technology into projects in meaningful ways (Brush & Saye, 2008; Krajcik, et al., 1998 as quoted in Summary of Research on Project-based Learning (2009)).
Considering the positive contribution of PBL, the researcher conducted a study on the implementation of Project Based Learning (PBL) to improve the speaking ability of second graders of SMPN 1 Kawedanan.

METHOD

This research used classroom action research design in which the researcher acted as the teacher who collaborated with the VIII F English teacher as the person who has in-depth knowledge about the said class. Collaborative implies that the researcher conducted the research together with the home teacher.

Classroom Action Research activities involve repeated cycles, each consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. As quoted by Latief (2011), Kemmis & McTaggert (1988) state the result of one cycle is used to determine the need for the following cycle, until the problems are solved by the strategy.

1. Plan

At this stage, the researcher shared ideas with the teacher in order to discuss the lesson plan, material, media, time, schedule, and instrument for observation. The material in the lesson plan was based on the syllabus in the curriculum. The speaking material that the researcher used was asking, giving and rejecting information and opinion that are taught in the eighth grade of Junior high school. The researcher used photographs, field notes, interview questions sheet to support in observation.

2. Action

The researcher carried out the lesson plan in the class. She conducted the teaching activities step by step based on the lesson plan. She applied project-based learning in speaking to the eight grade students. Here, the researcher came to the class with the lesson plan that was previously approved by teacher. The researcher gave the material about asking and giving information which was entitled “Local Tourism Object”. The researcher gave an example of information about one of local tourism object in Magetan, namely Tirtosari Waterfall. Then, the researcher had a “Question and Answer” session with the students about what she explained before. The researcher asked about what kind of information that they got from the text to encourage them to speak. Then the researcher divided the class into six groups, each consisting of four or five students. The students chose their groups freely. After that the researcher distributed the worksheets and gave explanation about what they had to do. At the end of the class, almost all of the groups finished their work. The researcher continued to the next meeting. The students presented their work. Having
implemented PBL, the researcher failed to fix the criteria of accomplishment for this research, so she opted to use number head together in groups, gave the students new worksheets and new material about asking and giving opinion. The remaining parts of the study still employed the same steps.

3. Observation

In this part of the study the researcher monitored students’ progress in speaking and made necessary notes in her observation sheets, focusing on the following: student-student interaction, the student-teacher interaction and anything they did during the teaching and learning process. The researcher was assisted by the English teacher who also observed the activities, gave his ideas, opinions, and also noted the strength and weaknesses of lesson plan implementation using project based learning in teaching speaking.

4. Reflection

After completing teaching and learning activity using project based-learning, the researcher recited the occurrences in the classroom as the effect of the action. The researcher and the teacher evaluated the process and the result of the implementation of project based learning in teaching speaking. The evaluation really helped in deciding what the researcher had to do in the next cycle.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings of Cycle One

The researcher divided the findings into three aspects. The first is students’ participation, since PBL gives a chance to the students to interact in small groups and big groups where they could actively participate during the teaching and learning. The second is students’ performance. Students’ performance at the end of teaching and learning is important because PBL leads them to end product, which means that the product of teaching and learning is important as the process. The third is students’ project. Students’ project here refers to students’ written report that constitutes their final assignment. Then, the criteria of success for this research is divided into two, which are process and product of teaching and learning. The criteria of process here, 85% of the students’ could active participate during teaching and learning. Besides, the product of teaching and learning, 85% of the students successfully met the requirements of KKM.
**Students’ Participation**

Students’ participation was judged by their interaction in small and also big groups. Here, the researcher observed how the students’ interacted with the others and with the teacher and how the students answered the researcher’s questions during teaching and learning process. From this cycle it was discovered that 16 students (59%) participated in the teaching learning process. The researcher could not reach the criteria of success that has been set for this study, in which 85% of the students actively participated in the class.

**Students’ Performance**

Students’ performance was judged by their speaking performance in front of the class. How the students’ interacted with the others in class was also important to know their performance. Students’ performance was observed based on the scoring rubric in the Table 1.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Excellent (4)</th>
<th>Good (3)</th>
<th>Fair (2)</th>
<th>Poor (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows the students’ performance is based on three aspects, i.e., content, fluency and accuracy. The grade ranges between 1-4 for each aspect. Then, this point was converted into the score. Based on this, the researcher decided students’ score in performance. There were only 13 students (48%) who met the criteria of KKM. The percentage of students who met the required KKM fell below the minimum expectation of 85%.

**Students’ Project**

Students’ project refers to the written report of the end product for teaching and learning. This also serves the transcript of students’ performance. Their dialogues were incorporated into the project here. Students’ projects which are based on the scoring rubric are presented in Table 2.
### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Score</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4            | The usage of right expression and the information about “Local Tourism Object” is clearly explained. | In-depth organization of information:  
  - Details, facts clearly stated  
  - Transitions sound natural so the writing flows  
  - Effective or elaborate examples | Very few errors in grammar. |
| 3            | The usage of expression is not really appropriate, but the information about “Local Tourism Object” is clearly explained. | Well-organized of information:  
  - Details, facts included  
  - Transitions fits the purpose  
  - Good examples | Some errors, but they do not interfere with reading or understanding the writing. |
| 2            | The usage of right expression, but the information about “Local Tourism Object” is not really clearly explained. | Not well organized of information:  
  - Details, facts are confusing  
  - Transitions are ordinary  
  - Few examples | Several errors that slows down the reader. |
| 1            | The wrong expression and lack of information about “Local Tourism Object”. | Not organized  
  - Details, facts are unclear or not related  
  - No transitions  
  - No examples | Filled with errors that interferes with the reading. |

### Descriptor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Excellent (4)</th>
<th>Good (3)</th>
<th>Fair (2)</th>
<th>Poor (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Organization Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above clearly indicates that students’ projects were scored on the basis of three aspects. The first is the content of the dialogue. The second is the organization of the dialogue. The last is grammar of the dialogue. The score ranges from 1 to 4. Then, the point converted into the score. This score is used to know whether the students passed KKM or not. There were only 8 students (30%) who met the KKM criteria. The result fulfill the research criteria of minimum 85%.

The result of the students’ participation, their performance as well as their project in cycle one did not satisfy criteria of success that has been set for this study. So, the researcher continued in the next cycle by making some revisions from cycle one.

The researcher applied Number Heads Together method for students in groups in the cycle two. Then, the researcher gave a new material which is designed to elucidate information about students’ asking and giving opinion in cycle two. Finally, the researcher issued new worksheets for the students in the cycle two.

**Findings of Cycle Two**

**Students’ Participation**
In cycle two, 24 students (89%) actively participated. There was a significant increase in comparison to the result from cycle one. Students’ actively participated in the class. They made good interaction in both small groups and big groups. The result of the students’ participation fulfilled the research criteria of success for this study.

**Students’ Performance**
In the cycle two, 25 students (92%) managed to meet the KKM criteria in performance. They performed well in front of the class because they had made good preparation before. The result met the research criteria of success for this study.

**Students’ Project**
In cycle two, 27 students (100%) met the KKM criteria for successful completion of students’ project. The students cooperated well in their respective groups. All group members gave their opinion during the discussions. Criteria of success were met in cycle two. More than 85% of the students actively participated in the discussion. More than 85% of the students also satisfied KKM criteria for success in their performance and projects.
Discussion
Students’ Participation
Students’ participation from the first meeting of the cycle one to the second meeting of the cycle two had increased significantly. Project-Based Learning implemented in the class helped the students to become more active in the class. Project Based Learning that was implemented in a group discussion helped the students to increase their participation. Thanks to PBL, student interacted well in a small group before they performed in a big discussion. In their small groups, the students managed to prepare their speech before they appear before the class. Besides that, the students’ prior knowledge about the material could help the students to improve their participation during teaching learning process.

The students’ participation in cycle one and the students’ participation in cycle two was significantly increased. In the cycle one, the students who actively involved were 16 students or 59% of the students. In other hand, there were 24 students actively involved in the cycle two or 89%. Based on the result, there was increased around 30%. This result could fulfill the researcher’s criterion.

The increasing of students’ participation was the effect of the implementation of Project Based Learning. Belland, et al., 2006; Lightner, et al., 2007 as cited in Summary of Research on Project-based Learning (2009) stated that the students enjoying PBL because it gave them opportunities to interact with their friends and make new friends through cooperative projects. Small group gave opportunity to speak and interact for the students (Hammer, 2007: 346). When students have a small group to discuss, they felt more comfortable than they had to speak in a big group of students. As quoted by Agustina (2011), Cahyono, 2011: 40 stated that the aim of small group discussion is to enable learners to be actively involved in a discussion involving a limited number of students. The motivation or participation also improves when they work in small group (Ur, 2004: 7 as quoted in Agustina (2011)).

Project Based Learning that was implemented toward small group discussion made the students’ participation increased during teaching learning process. The students were actively involved in the discussion. They could discuss in the small group and also in the big group. The students who had small discussion first would have better speech in a big discussion rather than the one who had not small discussion first. By grouping the students into four or five students each group based on the theory of Project Based Learning, it could improve the students’ participation in the class. This indicates that the students’ speaking skill also improve through the Project Based Learning.
The Students’ Performance

The students’ performance from the cycle one to the cycle two was significantly increased. For pre-test, the students who performed in front of the class and also answer the researcher’s question only 7 students or 26% of the students. They also had low score for their performance. In the last meeting of the cycle one, the students’ performance was a bit increased. All of the students had to perform in this cycle, but the result of their performance still low. The students’ fluency and accuracy were still in low level. In the second cycle, the students’ performance got better than before. The researcher helped them to improve their speaking skill during teaching learning process.

The students’ performance was significantly increased. In the first cycle, no one got excellent, but in the second cycle there were 4 students who got excellent. The amount of the students who got good score in the first cycle was 13 students. Then, in the second cycle there were 21 students who got good score. Students who got fair score in the first and second cycle were same. There were 2 students who got this score. In the first cycle, there were 12 students who got poor score, but in the second cycle, there was no one got poor score.

Harmer (2007: 347) stated that when a student makes a presentation, it is important that we give others students task to carry out as they listen. Therefore, performance makes the students actively involved by presenting and giving feedback. The increase of students’ performance between first and second cycle indicated that the implementation of Project Based Learning was successful. The students made a good improvement in their performance. When they had small discussion first and they master the material, they could have good performance. By implementing PBL, the students could have those things to improve their performance in speaking.

The Students’ Project

The improvement that students made through the implementation of Project Based Learning also could be seen from the students’ project. The project was in written form. The researcher and the English teacher gave score of the students’ project. In the first cycle, the score of the students’ project was individual score. The reason was because some students were still dominant in group and students did not really work in the project. On the other hand, in the second cycle, the score was based on the students’ group work. The students had cooperated with each other in group, so the researcher and the teacher decided to give groups score for the second project which every student in one group has the same score. The score of the students’ project also increased from the first cycle to the second cycle.
The comparison between students’ project in cycle one and cycle two was very different. Like the explanation before, for the second cycle, the score was based on the group score. In cycle one, there were only 8 students who passed the KKM or 30% of the students. But, there were three students who got excellent score in this cycle. However, it did not reach the researcher’s criterion of success for this study. But then, in the second cycle the students did the project well. They could cover all of aspects, like the content, organization and grammar. The students who passed KKM in the second project were 27 students or 100% of the students could pass the KKM. This result could fulfill the researcher’s criterion, which is 85% of the students could reach KKM for the product.

Project Based Learning could improve the students’ speaking skill in term of students’ project. The researcher helped the students in the process of teaching and learning. The students also could discuss with their friends about the project. The material that has been familiar with the students also helped them to make a good project.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

According to the study on improving students’ speaking skill through Project-Based Learning for second graders of SMPN 1 Kawedanan, Magetan, the researcher comes to the conclusion that PBL could improve the students’ speaking skill well.

The researcher explained to the students what PBL is. Then, she gave the students projects to completedo and divided the class into six groups using the method called Numbered Heads Together. Each group consisted of four or five students. The students gave material about asking and giving opinion with the theme “Local Tourism Object” because it is a familiar topic and students have good knowledge about it. Then, in the group, the students did their work by making dialogue. After the students finished writing their dialogues, they performed it in front of the class as their end product. PBL helped the students to improve their speaking skill as is demonstrated by the result of the study which shows significant improvement.

The activity of group discussion in the implementation of PBL helped the students to improve their speaking skill because they could interact with their friends in small group before they spoke in a big group. The use of Numbered Heads Together method to divide the students in a group also helped the students to engage in good interaction with their friends. The material that the researcher chose for the students,
“Local Tourism Object” also helped the students to understand the material well and they used their prior knowledge to do their work.

Students with low performance in speaking could improve their skill through Project-Based Learning that was proven by the increase in students’ class participation because PBL gave them a chance to interact in small and big groups. Then, the score of students’ performance also increased because the students had prepared in a small group before they performed in a big group. Lastly, the score of students’ project also increased because they cooperated well in a group. The students could reach the research criteria of the success of this study; 85% of them could participate in the class discussion and 85% of them met KKM. The students gave positive response toward the implementation of PBL. They enjoyed the discussion and the performance based on what they had made. There was also improvement in students’ speaking skill. These facts indicate that the study has managed to improve students’ speaking skill.

Suggestions

The implementation of Project Based Learning for Second Graders of SMPN 1 Kawedanan, Magetan for improving students’ speaking skill was successful. When the teacher managed to implement this method, it will produce significant change in students’ motivation and their attitude during the teaching learning process.

The method is highly applicable because it could foster students’ speaking skill. With increasing courage to speak in small groups, students will find it easier to speak up in a big group. This method is also applicable in the wider context of teaching learning within the school.

For the future researchers in this topic, it is advisable that they employ more and varied worksh to ensure that each group has their own worksheets containing different questions and problems. The said worksheet could help the students’ to use their prior knowledge well. Besides that, when the students have many worksheet they could get more information.

REFERENCES


Project Based Learning - IAE-Pedia. (Online), (http://iae-pedia.org/Project-Based_Learning), accessed February 23, 2013.